304 563 852 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised, chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo [778] or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest [535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them, no uninitiated individual may come near them. [198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are [551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 293 776 481 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breechcloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.

852 shaved strips on top of the head, while the sides are shaved similarly
[302] in semi-circular strips. On the seventh day, people who were previously circumcised bring chickens to sacrifice to the spirits of the paths so that all will go well, but the newly circumcised take no part in the proceedings. The children wash, oil themselves, and put on their
852 beautiful clothes. Everything is brand new, the breechcloth, the
292 trousers, the shirt, the blanket, and the headgear. The belt is adorned
301 with a knife in a leather sheath and with a needle case which has at the end a tuft of leather strips with cowries attached to them. They
[776] hold a cow's tail, also adorned with cowries, to drive off the scheuyan spirits who dislike little rascals and people who dress too well. Both wrists are adorned with copper bracelets. Needless to say, this flashy new outfit with its cowries that clang like bells lures the eye and bewitches the young boys, who decide to be circumcised at the first opportunity so they too may eat well and wear beautiful clothes.

852 /44/ The circumcised boys continue to walk bent over, leaning on
[481] their sticks, but their crude staff is replaced with two sticks decorated with burnt designs and tied together. They no longer wear a tail. They go to greet the chiefs, and they thank those who have given them gifts. They walk to the sound of the large drum, since the bindré is forbidden at circumcision ceremonies, and sing plaintive chants to the spirits. They parade in the marketplace and display their clothes in
[535] the villages. They dance before the chiefs, and their dances are very graceful indeed. They dance in unison to the beat of the drum, making the same gestures all together or two by two, varying the figures in accordance with the beat. After seven days the festivities are over, and they all return to their families and take up everyday life as though nothing had happened.

We shall now study this everyday life.

/45/ BOOK III. DAILY WORK AND TRADES

Chapter 1. Occupations of a Mossi

221 The Mossi are essentially cultivators, and it may be said that no
241 Mossi who works at a trade will fail to cultivate his fields when the

224 Each village goes there in a group, burning the bush and driving on the game. If the plan is carried out properly, the animals are eventually enclosed within a circle of fire behind which stand the natives, some on horseback and armed with spears, others on foot with their dogs and equipped merely with sticks or sometimes with bows and arrows. The bows are of medium size and made of hard wood. The 411 224 string is usually made from a rattan stem or a millet stalk. Arrows are made of the tough and light stems of tall reeds; they are not barbed, but the tip is made of iron and shaped like a harpoon, with two and sometimes three pairs of teeth. The leather quiver hangs from the shoulder.

224 The panic-stricken hares, deer, antelope of various kinds, guinea hens, and partridges run all around the fiery circle, and those who manage to cross this first obstacle are felled by the blows of the hunters. These hunts are sometimes quite fruitful, and buffalo and koba are 224 occasionally caught. Unfortunately, every animal killed in the bush 661 belongs by right to the naba, who searches the hunters' bags and takes what he pleases. If he learns that a lucky hunter has killed an antelope and failed to bring it, he summons him to his presence, reproves him harshly for his lack of consideration, and thrashes him soundly. It must nevertheless be said that such cases are constantly growing rarer, and now the natives flatly refuse to yield their catch.

224 Often no game is caught because one of the villages has failed to appear and the animals have fled through the unguarded opening. In short, these hunting parties are mostly a pastime and entertainment. The hunters who bring back a catch are few, owing to the large number of men who participate. It is true that when they set out for the hunt they all hope they will be lucky. They all are thirsty, for at this time of year the sun is very hot and it is better to hunt in the middle of the day when the game lies down in the bushes and cannot run very far. These hunting parties dwindle year by year. The cultivated fields are more extensive, and the game has withdrawn deeper into the bush. Also, the natives find it more difficult to reaching an agreement for large parties of beaters; /51/ they prefer to hunt in small groups, far from the chiefs' sight, so that nothing will be taken from them.

226 In addition to hunting, fishing is the great pastime at this time of year. Professional fishermen are as rare as professional hunters. Of course, those who live on the banks of streams usually know how to [48] swim, especially when they live near those watercourses which are most difficult to ford.

1[e.g., February - April. - Analyst]

491 builds bridges, but as they are made exclusively with materials found in the country, forked sticks and beams covered with pounded earth, the first swelling of the water carries the whole structure away, and after a heavy rain one must wait for the waters to subside and resort to ferrymen who justifiably charge for their work.

481 484 501 The ferrymen proceed as follows. The person who wishes to cross holds on to a thick beam, a gourd, or a simple clay jar, which holds him out of the water; sometimes two large sticks under his arms serve as a life belt. In a few places rafts are available, made of sticks connected with séko and covered with dry grass. The ferryman swims next to him and prevents him from being carried too far by the current. At certain favored fords near the French posts, ferryboats are available.

484 Livestock swim across, and the ferryman holds their muzzles out of the water to prevent them from drowning. These crossings take a long time and add up to considerable expense, and animals are often carried away by the current or snatched by crocodiles. Woe to the man who dispenses with ferrymen, if he is not familiar with the bottom of the river and the strength of the current! He often drowns, and those whose aid he scorned do nothing to help him. On the other hand, if the caravans postpone their departure for too long, the rivers will be dry, the grass burned off, and the animals will die of hunger or thirst, or they will arrive at the markets exhausted and lean and will sell poorly.

These journeys thus entail a number of hazards; in addition, although imported goods sell high, living expenses run equally high, and if a profit is to be made, one cannot grow fat along the way. He will make up for it when he returns to the village.

442 The need for middlemen brings other hazards. Lt. Marc, who was well qualified to discuss the subject because he was twice in command of the Léo Post, described the situation as follows: "The livestock upon arrival is bought by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives and control the market prices... These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. /61/ These scouts attempt to alarm the cattle owners with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Sometimes, at the height of the business season, in January and February, livestock prices may fluctuate by one

482 their pack, their full cartridge pouches, and their gun. This is proved by the fact that it is very easy to find volunteer porters nowadays who [465] agree to carry a box weighing 25 or 30 kilograms for 200 or 400 kilometers, or even farther, for half a franc a day.

[492] The fabrics are coiled into huge rolls which hang on either side of the ox or donkey, or, when the man carries them himself, they are [285] folded in baskets from one and a half to two meters long, made of bamboo stems slit lengthwise in two. These baskets are semi-cylindrical in shape and are used to carry kola nuts on the way back. A small pillow is attached to the center of the basket, and when the traveller stops to rest, he looks for a thick tree, leans one tip of the [481] basket on the crotch of two branches and the other tip on the bamboo he uses as a staff. He can thus pick up his load effortlessly when the resting period is over.

484 The traveller always returns to his village at night to avoid those prying persons who would rush out to see what he brought back. The goods are carefully put away, and on the following day the man takes up village life as though he had never left it. It is only gradually, at the evening gatherings, that he relates his adventures. At the first subsequent festivity, however, he dons his new, bright clothes and a red tarboosh, sometimes stockings and shoes, and proudly displays them. Those who have tasted /64/ the life of travel and adventure cannot do without it, and they set out again every year. Some of the independent and carefree young men even live all winter on the [178] profits of their distant journey and no longer cultivate the soil. This is shocking to the elders, who do not understand it at all but are aware that something has changed in their country.

600 Some Europeans have attempted to engage in livestock trading like the natives. One enterprising and courageous European settled in Ouahigouya, and another near Mané; a trading house sent one of its representatives to Ouagadougou, and a Syrian settled there. None of them seems to have succeeded. We are not in their confidence and cannot say just why this happened, but would it not be, at least in part, because a European cannot easily adapt himself to the native way of life? The Blacks manage to make a profit because they do not spend much along the way; they subsist on very little and carry part of the goods themselves instead of hiring porters. Also, the natives

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent bendere.

On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.[6] With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.[7]

A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to